

OUR STORY TOO - LESSON 7
REVIEW TEST FOR PART A

(1) - (2) The current scholarly abbreviation C.E. replaces A.D. in recognition that there are other religions and other ways of dating. This abbreviation stands for Common Era or Christian Era. The abbreviation B.C. is then replaced by the abbreviation B.C.E., which stands for "before the Common Era".

(3) - (5) Christianity inherited from Judaism the practice of accepting non-Jewish converts. The conversion process to Judaism included both circumcision and ritual immersion.

Non-Jews who associated with Jewish synagogues but who did not complete the conversion process were referred to as God-fearers.

(6) - (7) The two factors in early Christianity by which Hellenistic (Greek) interpretations deeply influenced the basic beliefs of the churches were:

(a) the predominantly non-Jewish environs and membership of most churches

(b) the use of a Greek translation of the Jewish Bible, known as the Septuagint.

(8) - (15) Match each of the following theological terms with one of the definitions below:

(a) Apology

(b) Dogma

(c) Elect

(d) Grace

(e) Justification

(f) Original Sin

(g) Predestination

(h) Sin

(8) d unmerited divine assistance for one's spiritual path; often viewed as special blessing received in intense experience

(9) g the idea that one's eternal destiny is determined beforehand, from the beginning of time, by God's will

(10) a a formal defense of the Christian faith

(11) b a church's authoritative statement of belief; doctrine

(12) f the fundamental state of sin, inherited from the first human Adam, which infects all of humanity if not saved by Christ

(13) h a transgression or offense against God's laws or wishes; more generally, a continuing state of estrangement from God

(14) e the state of being released by God from the guilt of sin

(15) c those chosen by God for eternal life

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(16) - (21) Match each of the following descriptions with one of these leadership terms: (a) Bishop, (b) Cardinal, (c) Clergy, (d) Deacon, or (e) Patriarch.

(16) c Those ordained persons in a church permitted to perform priestly and/or pastoral duties.

(17) a In early Christianity, an elected head of a diocese; now the appointed head of a diocese.

(18) e One of the bishops of the four or five major early Christian centers ~~Rome, Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, and Constantinople.~~

(19) d The lowest ordained office in the Roman Catholic church.

(20) d In modern Protestant churches, an official elected to certain responsibilities in worship or administration.

(21) b An official in the Roman Catholic Church next below the pope and appointed by the pope.

(22) - (24) The four centers of power in early Christianity were the cities of Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, and Rome.

After the reign of Emperor Constantine, the two cities that moved into prominence in Christianity were Constantinople and Rome.

(25) As Christian liturgy developed in the first three centuries, which of the following became the central act, around which the rest of the liturgy evolved? e

(a) Scripture readings

(b) Sermon

(c) Hymns and songs

(d) Prayers of the people

(e) Eucharist

(26) - (27) The saints (the dead holy ones) were viewed as extending the benefits of Christian power to all. Those regarded as saints had either died as martyrs or had performed great miracles.

They were regarded as available to Christians on earth as heavenly friends, protectors, patrons.

Relics of these saints were believed to carry the personal power of that saint

(28) - (29) The two motivating forces that combined to produce monks and hermits in early Christianity were:

(a) Questioning of the worldly success of the churches and their interest in honors and prestige

(b) Seeking after a higher spiritual life, a greater closeness to God

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- (30) - (33) Identify the following descriptions with one of these early Christian leaders.
(a) Athanasius (b) Arius (c) Marcion (d) Mani
- (30) d In the third century, this Eastern leader called himself the Apostle of Jesus Christ and taught that the universe was divided into forces of Light and Darkness. He viewed Jesus as the most perfect of the messengers of the God of Light and as a divine being who only seemed to be mortal.
- (31) C A preacher in Rome in the second century, he argued that the church should not keep the Hebrew Scriptures because this was the book of the evil creator God.
- (32) b A church elder in Alexandria who argued that Christ was different from God and indeed had been created at a certain point in time by God as the Logos, the first principle of the cosmos through whom all else was created.
- (33) a A bishop's secretary and later a bishop himself, he argued that the belief that Christ was a creature threatened the idea of salvation through Christ. He viewed Christ not as created, but as begotten or generated from God.
- (34) - (36) The three forces that combined in the fourth and fifth centuries which resulted in a gradual unification of Christianity and in a lessening of influence of Roman "paganism" and sectarian Christian groups were:
- (a) Christian political power
(b) the ascetic movement
(c) devotion to relics
- (37) - (38) The fifth century Christian leader Augustine was bishop of Hippo in North Africa. Augustine played a major role in helping the Catholic Church defeat a competing Christian church in Africa known as the Donatists.
- In theological discussion, Augustine upheld the doctrine of predestination, that God had determined the fate of every soul from the beginning. His chief opponent was Pelagius, who argued that individuals are free to accept or reject God's grace
- (39) - (40) The Council of Chalcedon in the fourth century declared that Christ was of two natures, that is truly human and truly divine. Christians who objected to the Chalcedon formulation were known as Monophysites. They argued that Christ had only one nature, and that nature could only be divine.

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- (41) - (42) The Western and Eastern branches of Christianity had to deal with very different problems.

That which took precedence in the West in the fifth and sixth centuries were the barbarian invasions, that is attacks by various societies on the perimeters of the empire. The leaders and missionaries of the Western church had to deal with European peoples whom they viewed as primitive and pagan.

The Eastern church had to face two literate, imperialistic societies, each with its own high sense of theology and ethics. The first of these societies was Persia and the second was Islam.

- (43) - (45) One of the theological controversies between East and West arose over the wording of the Nicene creed. In the sixth century the Latin or Western church had added to the creed the clause "and the Son", thereby stating that the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father and the Son, rather than from the Father alone (which was the original wording of the creed). The Greek or Eastern church objected on theological grounds and also because this addition was never presented to a whole council of the church.

- (46) Even after centuries of missionary work in Europe and England, Christianity still had to compete with older customs and religious practices. One person who attempted to consolidate Catholic Christian power in Europe was the missionary Boniface, who led a church council in 742 and ordered monks and priests to submit to church discipline.

Another such consolidator was the Frankish ruler named Charles the Great or Charlemagne. This ruler oriented the clergy more firmly toward Rome and instituted a program of basic education for priests. His coronation in 800 as Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire cemented the pact between church and state.

- (47) - (48) In the tenth and eleventh centuries struggles developed between the nobles (or lay aristocracy) and the bishops and abbots of the church. Church councils attempted to limit the power of nobles, threatening them with excommunication if they did not obey.

The nobles fought back by appointing their own men to be bishops and abbots in their territory.

Pope Gregory VII insisted on the independence of church and church appointments from the state. He thereby initiated an era of powerful popes.



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- (49) Pope Urban II launched the First Crusade by a dramatic appeal for the deliverance of Jerusalem and the Eastern church from Muslim conquerors.
- (50) - (51) In the 12th century intellectual growth and transformation occurred:
- (a) with the beginning of the movement known as scholasticism, which sought to understand Christian faith in terms of human reason.
 - (b) with the movement of intellectual life out of the monasteries into the universities.
- (52) The greatest medieval theologian was a Dominican teacher and writer named Thomas Aquinas, who lived in the 13th century.
- In his great literary work called Summa Theologica, he developed a form of Aristotelianism that incorporated Greek philosophy into Christianity.
- (53) - (55) The rule of Pope Innocent III in the 13th century was the peak of papal power. This pope...
- called a church council, the Fourth Lateran Council, in 1215.
 - integrated into the church the new orders, the Franciscans and the Dominicans, thus bringing many potential dissidents into the mainstream.
 - centralized the Inquisition to deal with dissidents.
 - officially declared the doctrine of transubstantiation in response to increased devotion to the Eucharist.
 - officially endorsed the popular feasts celebrating the Immaculate Conception in response to increased devotion to the Virgin Mary.
- (56) - (57) During the 12th and 13th centuries, perceptions of the Jews began to change. Prior to this, Jews had been regarded as resident aliens, that is, accepted but not necessarily possessing the same rights as others. Now they were seen as demonic infidels within the walls of Christendom.
- This shift in attitude was evidenced by attacks on Jews during the Crusades, and expulsions of Jews from England, France, Spain, and Portugal.
- (58) From the beginning Protestantism represented a new and strong option for the laity. This was reflected in:
- (a) The emphasis of the Reformers on the religiousness of the layperson who was involved in the ordinary world (of work, money, and sexuality)
 - (b) The teaching of the Reformers that every profession was a calling.

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- (59) The 14th century English writer who called for vernacular translations of the Bible and lay communion with both bread and wine was named John Wycliffe.
- (60) - (61) The tumultuous conditions in 14th and 15th century Europe that led to the call for reform included:
- (a) A plague, referred to as the Black Death, that destroyed one-third of Europe's population.
 - (b) A prolonged series of conflicts between England and France, referred to as the Hundred Years' War.
 - (c) The enmeshing of the church hierarchy, including the papacy itself, in controversy and international politics.
 - (d) The beginning of the movement called the Renaissance, which included a new interest in human reason and emotions.
- (62) - (63) Religious observances in the 14th and 15th centuries that were easy targets of criticism included:
- (a) The proliferation of pilgrimages, devotions to the saints, and religious processions, which were religious expressions over which the laity could exercise control and which were viewed by some of the learned as being primarily social occasions.
 - (b) The endowment of enormous numbers of Masses.
 - (c) The issuance of papal decrees called indulgences, that granted a person remission from punishment in purgatory.
- (64) - (68) The early Protestants drastically changed liturgical practices.
- (a) They eliminated entirely the sacraments of penance and extreme unction.
 - (b) They maintained the practices of marriage, confirmation, and ordination, but no longer regarded them as sacraments.
 - (c) They maintained the sacrament of Baptism but disagreed over its nature. Most Protestant churches still baptized infants, but some limited baptism to adults.
 - (d) They maintained the Sacrament of the Eucharist but disagreed over how often to celebrate it and how it should be interpreted. Luther believed that in the Eucharist Christ's body was present. Zwingli viewed the Supper as a memorial only.
 - (e) They gave primary place to preaching of the Word, rather than to sacraments.

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(69) True X or False

The Reformation in England began from royal initiative, when Henry VIII broke with the pope because he could not get his latest marriage annulled.

(70) - (73) Some of the diverse beliefs of the groups of the Radical Reformation were:

(a) The church becomes perfect by returning to the ideals of primitive Christianity.

(b) The church becomes perfect by following the immediate guidance of the Holy Spirit.

(c) The church should contain only voluntary believers.

(d) Christians should not be involved at all in secular government.

(e) Christians should seek silence and contemplation, emphasizing the inner work of the Holy Spirit within the believer

(f) Christians must separate from the world and create the perfect Christian church and society because of the imminent arrival of the millennium and the Second Coming of Christ

(g) The church should be free from state interference.

(74) The term "Anabaptists" literally means "baptized again".

Anabaptists infuriated both Catholics and other Protestant Reformers by their practice of rebaptizing their members who had been baptized as infants

(75) - (77) Roman Catholics and Protestants approached church reform and church health in different ways.

(a) For Catholics the church's core was the ordained priests and bishops that is, those who held the power of the sacraments. The Catholic approach thus was that if the priests and bishops were set on the right path, then the church would regain its health.

(b) For Protestants, the church's strength lay in the laity, and thus they greatly valued the religious life of the laity. The Protestant approach was to emphasize the faith of the believer.

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- (78) - (80) Orthodox churches were much less affected by these reform movements. The two primary reasons for this were:
- (a) The conflicts that fueled the western Reformation were much less pressing in the Orthodox churches, that is the conflicts between church and state and between clergy and laity.
 - (b) The Orthodox churches had a continuing focus of unity in the liturgy and worshipping community.
- (81) Beginning in the 1500's missionaries transported Christian doctrine and practice to the Americas and to several other places. In certain societies, such as Mexico, where Spanish Catholic missionaries encountered a form of high civilization and a strong native religion, a kind of syncretism developed with new holy figures and new practices being superimposed on the local beliefs.
- (82) Whereas the early French and Spanish immigrants to the Americas were primarily friars, soldiers, explorers, and traders, the English Protestant immigrants were family groups and their focus was thus on farming and village life.
- (83) - (84) Black American Christianity took a form different from Native American, Protestant, and Catholic Christianity.
- (a) Due to their ancient African heritage, blacks retained a preference for ecstatic religion, dance, body movement, responsive chanting.
 - (b) Because their Christian faith developed in America primarily in the age of revivals, their religion was highly evangelical.
 - (c) Since their masters discouraged education, they relied on oral tradition, song, and dramatic preaching style.
- (85) True X or False __
The 18th century religious revivals encouraged greater inward devotion and greater individual piety. The primary significance of this movement, however, was that it opened the way toward a greater role for emotions in Christian faith.
- (86) The growth of experiential Christianity included a voluntaristic thrust, namely that if each person's experience was valid, then each person could choose the appropriate church to suit his/her needs. This had a dramatic effect on the churches. Whereas the church splits that resulted from 18th century revivals healed for the most part, the 19th century revivals produced a rash of sectarianism, particularly in the U.S. This resulted in hundreds of new denominations began in the century between 1825 and 1925.

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- (87) The freedom to follow one's own religious experience gave rise to prophets with new revelations.

The name of the 19th century man who claimed to receive visions about the Book of Mormon and how to translate it was Joseph Smith. The name of the church that grew out of this book is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, or, as they are commonly called, the Mormons.

The name of the 19th century woman who claimed to receive messages that led her to establish with others the doctrines and practices of a new church was Ellen G. White. The name of the church is the Seventh Day Adventists.

- (88) Theologians around the turn of the 20th century developed a theological rationale for the Christian thrust toward social-political action, this theological rationale being called the Social Gospel.

In more recent decades many theologians have developed "liberation" theologies to express Christian commitment to freedom and human rights of the oppressed.

- (89) Both "social Christianity" and experiential Christianity continue to be major forces in contemporary churches. Which one, according to Frankiel, has been most powerful in the last 200 years? experiential Christianity.

- (90) - (96) Match one of these U.S.A. Protestant terms with the descriptions below:
- | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| (a) Pentecostalists | (b) Charismatics | (c) Evangelicals |
| (d) Fundamentalists | (e) Mainline/Old-line | |

- (90) b A movement that swept Christian churches in the 1970's, beginning in Roman Catholic churches and spreading to mainline churches.
- (91) d Those who called themselves this rejected "liberal" trends in early 20th century Protestantism. They place their faith in a literal interpretation of an inerrant Bible.
- (92) c They emphasize evangelism, conservative orthodoxy, traditional morality, and strict interpretation of Bible.
- (93) e They are the historic churches that are strongest in the North and Midwest. They founded the ecumenical movement.
- (94) a A movement that sprang up at the beginning of the 20th century which emphasized the descent of the Holy Spirit.
- (95) b Their emphasis on the gifts of the Spirit has not led to new denominations or sects.
- (96) a Their emphasis on the gifts of the Spirit did lead to the formation of new denominations.

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(97) - (100) During the 19th and early 20th centuries, when the European immigrant communities that made up the Roman Catholic Church in the U.S. remained strong in themselves, this church kept a firm, albeit defensive, attachment to its traditions & doctrines. By the mid-20th century, however, many Roman Catholics had begun to question what seemed the anti-modern position of their church.

Pope John XXIII called a great church convocation in 1962-65 called Vatican II. This council revolutionized the Roman Catholic Church in many ways:

- (a) A declaration on religious freedom that urged tolerance of other religious ways and even other Christian churches
- (b) Major changes in the liturgy, including translation of the Mass into the language of each nation, and allowing more time for congregational singing and for sermons

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- (A) *Her Story*, Introduction, pages 1-3
- (1) MacHaffie outlines three stages in the study of women and Christianity.
- (a) Gathering facts about activities of women that had been unknown or ignored.
 - (b) Recognizing that the Christian tradition is intertwined with patriarchy and, on many occasions and in many places, functioned to oppress and degrade women.
 - (c) Affirming in spite of (b) that women in many places and times have benefited from the Christian tradition and have actively contributed to it.

As you begin your study of this book, what is the relative importance to you of each of the above three stages? Is one more important to you now than the others? Explain in a one-page essay.

(Essays will of course vary. Look for a clear, insightful discussion of these stages and their importance to the writer.)

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(B) Her Story, Chapter 1, pages 5-21
"Biblical Images of Women"

- (1) In a one-paragraph essay explain why many people who are concerned with the dignity and rights of women have abandoned in despair the Christian tradition and the Bible in particular.

④ The Bible, the cornerstone of the Christian tradition, was born and bred in cultures that treated women and the feminine as inferior and unworthy. In the pages of the Bible women are maimed, raped, and murdered, and explicitly regarded as the possessions of men. Throughout Christian history the Bible has to been used to deny the dignity and rights of women. The OT tells us that woman was made after man in the natural order of creation. The Bible tells us that woman was responsible for bringing sin into the world. The NT clearly shows that Jesus chose men as his apostles to continue his work. Scripture explicitly prohibits women from exercising authority in the church and in the home and commands that they keep silent in the public assembly.

- (2) MacHaffie outlines another approach to the Bible that takes seriously both the rights and interests of women and the view that the Bible contains the authoritative word of God to humanity. The five critical principles in this approach are:

- ⑤
- (a) The Bible has been written, translated, and interpreted for centuries by men in cultures that were patriarchal.
 - (b) A careful textual study must be made using all the available tools of Biblical scholarship.
 - (c) The Bible contains a great deal of material that treats women as subordinate and inferior to men. At the same time, there is a built-in judgment or critique of the degradation of women running through both Testaments which challenges the commands of silence and subordination.
 - (d) The demands of God must be distinguished from the demands of a particular culture.
 - (e) The early church gives us only a hint at the new reality of the gospel.

- (3) The overall of status of women in Hebrew society may be viewed in the following ways:

- ⑫
- (a) Only men were full-fledged members of the covenant community as made explicit in the rite of circumcision.
 - (b) A woman at every stage of life occupied a dependent and subordinate position, with her life beginning under the rule of her father and then at the time of her marriage that authority passed to her husband.
 - (c) A woman called her husband "ba'al", which meant "master", and in turn she was regarded as the property or possession of her husband.

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(3) (cont'd)

(d) It was primarily the role of mother that gave a woman respect and honor in society. A woman was expected to marry, to bear children, and to nurture/raise them.

(e) Barrenness was a dreaded curse for a woman because it deprived her of economic benefits and it removed an important source of authority and respect.

(f) Hebrew laws concerning marriage and sexuality show clearly a double standard for men and women. This was evidenced in virginity requirements, divorce possibilities, prostitution, and adultery.

(g) In the worship of the Hebrew God Yahweh, the priesthood was restricted to men, and women were not permitted to participate in religious observances if they were menstruating or had recently given birth.

(h) At the Temple in Jerusalem women were restricted to an outer court.

(i) In synagogues women were not counted in the quorum necessary for the formation of synagogue cong., were seated separately, were not permitted to read aloud or to assume any public position, and were not permitted to study the Scriptures.

(4) The four women who are referred to as "prophets" in the Hebrew Scriptures are:

Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, Noadiah

The probable reason for no identifiable writings from female prophets surviving is because:

they were not associated with groups of disciples who could preserve their oracles

The mere fact that these women are called "prophets", however, illustrates the Hebrew belief that: God could communicate messages of vital importance through either men or women.

(5) Three female rulers in Israelite/Judean history were:

Athaliah, Jezebel, Alexandra

(6) The Book of Esther portrays two women who took risks for their convictions, namely Vashti and Esther.

(7) The Book of Ruth portrays Ruth as a woman who shaped her own destiny and made radical choices that defied custom. Her decision to remain with Naomi has been referred to as the most "radical decision in all the memories of Israel", in that "one female has chosen another female in a world where life depends upon men."

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- (8) The strongest female image for God in the Hebrew Scriptures is that of mother.

② Another feminine image for God that developed is that of "Sophia" or wisdom. This is the feminine side of God which can be known by human beings and which is to be sought after.

- (9) Recent scholarship regarding the second creation story recorded in Genesis 2 - 3 show how poorly this account has been translated and interpreted.

- (10) Women in Hebrew culture acted as creators and transmitters of stories, poems, and ballads. Two women whose songs are recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures and attributed to them are Deborah and Miriam.

②½ The book in the Hebrew Scriptures that may have been written by a woman or a group of women is called the Song of Songs or Song of Solomon. This book is a series of love poems that describe love between a man and a woman.

- (11) In a one-paragraph essay explain how the Gospels demonstrate that an important feature of Jesus' ministry was affirming the equality and full humanity of women.

④ The Gospel writers used stories and teachings of Jesus in a selective way to make a statement about the meaning of Jesus' life for men and women. They include much of themselves and the prejudices of their culture in their writing. The cultural context of the first Christians tended to devalue women and the feminine. Yet in the early church's portrayal of Jesus, this perspective is never conveyed. Jesus never treats women as inferior to men. His words are filled with positive images of women and he defends their equality and full humanity many times in his ministry. The fact that this impression has been transmitted through the writings of men who shared the assumptions of their culture indicates how strong this feature was in the ministry of Jesus.

- (12) Two remarkable features about Jesus having female disciples/students/followers are:

①½ (a) Breaking with Jewish custom, these women left their homes and traveled openly with Jesus.

(b) According to Jewish custom, women were not permitted to study the Scriptures with a rabbi.

- (13) In his stories and sayings, Jesus often used sexual pairing to drive home the point that he was inviting both women and men to hear and respond to his words.

- ①½ (14) The fourth chapter of John records an incident in which Jesus spoke with a woman in public and sent her back to her village with the message that he was the Messiah. What makes the story even more remarkable is that this woman was a Samaritan.

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- (15) Jesus' teaching that addressed life situations of particular concern to women include:
- (a) lack of livelihood for widows.
 - (b) oppression of widows.
 - (c) divorce prohibited for men as well as for women.
 - (d) Adultery could be committed by a husband against his wife, as well as the other way around.

- (16) The cultural belief that women could not be trusted as witnesses to the truth is flouted by the risen Jesus. The first witnesses to the resurrection are women and they are sent to tell the male disciples that Jesus has risen.

- (17) The writings in the New Testament that can be ascribed to Paul without any question show his ambivalence about women. In a one-paragraph essay explain Paul's personal conflict about the role and status of women in the Christian community.

On the one hand, Paul knows the transforming power of the gospel and he clearly recognizes that relationships in the human community would be altered dramatically as a result. On the other hand, his own background as a Jew who strictly observed the law intrudes upon his belief that women and men are all full participants in the baptized community.

- (18) The words of Galatians 3:28 probably originally came from: an early statement of faith affirmed by new converts to Christianity at the time of their baptism.

This affirmation was a reversal of the prayer that Jewish men were expected to pray daily thanking God that they were not a Gentile, a slave, or a woman.

- (19) Paul's comments on marriage in 1 Corinthians 7 are remarkable considering his own background and the cultural context in which he was writing.

- (a) Marriage, as Paul describes it, involves a surprising degree of mutuality between husband and wife.

- (b) A new social alternative is opened up for women with the presentation of celibacy as a valid way of living.

- (20) Paul's comments in 1 Corinthians 11 about appropriate attire for women who participate in public worship show that he clearly assumes that women can pray and prophesy in the congregation.

Paul's vision of liberation included women, but by insisting that they cover their heads in public worship, he shows that he recoils from the social disorder that seemed to accompany the practical implementation of this freedom.

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(C) Her Story, Chapter 2, pages 23-41
"Women and the Early Churches"

(1) The full membership of women in Christian communities is remarkable in light of the Jewish practice that defined a synagogue congregation by the number of circumcised males present -----.

(2) Paul refers to several women who were his co-workers in the evangelization of the Hellenistic world. In Romans 16 he commends four women for having "labored hard" in the Lord, namely Mary, Tryphana, Tryphosa, and Persis. Also in Romans 16 he pays tribute to Priscilla and to her husband Aquila for their outstanding missionary work. In Philippians 4, Paul describes the two women Euodia and Syntycha as having worked side by side with him.

(3) The New Testament mentions three women who provided facilities for house churches, namely: Lydia, Nympha, and Mary.

(4) The communal life of the early Christians acquired organizational structure very quickly. Match these terms with the following descriptions:
(a) apostle (b) elder or presbyter (c) bishop or overseer

a They were the earliest figures of authority.

c The president or leader of the council of elders, this person was particularly responsible for the sacraments and the pastoral care of the congregation.

b They exercised a variety of functions at the local congregational level, such as teaching, discipline, regulation of worship, and pastoral care.

a They appointed elders in the new congregations.

(5) The New Testament is unclear about whether the above positions (#4) were ever held by women. There is some evidence, however, that women did. Match the following women with their descriptions:

(a) Junia (b) Phoebe (c) Atphia

b In Romans 16:1-2 she is referred to as a "diakonos" (deacon, official congregational leader) in the church in Cenchreae and as a "prostasis" (helper, patron, leader, president).

a In Romans 16:7 she is commended for her work as an apostle.

c In Philemon 1-2, she is addressed, along with two men, as one of the leaders of the house church in Colossae.

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- (6) The Deutero-Pauline passages that protest against the leadership of women in the early churches were probably written between the years 80 - 125. These passages do not describe the status of women in all the churches but instead try to impose upon the Christian communities the patriarchal standards of the ancient world.

MacHaffie agrees with scholars who distinguish these passages from the earlier genuine writings of Paul. These passages differ from Paul's writing in style, vocabulary, and outlook/perspective.

These Deutero-Pauline passages include the following:

- (a) the obedience and submission of wife to her husband as God's chosen authority.
- (b) a theological rationale for the subordination of female to male, namely that woman was created after man and that she was easily deceived by the devil.
- (c) a prohibition of women speaking, teaching, or exercising any kind of authority in the congregation.

- (7) The reasons behind the curtailment of female leadership in the early Christian communities include:

- (a) The early churches throughout the Greco-Roman world inherited the institutional structure of the Jewish synagogue, which meant government by groups of elected male elders, with women having no role.
- (b) By the end of the first century the churches had begin to realize that the end of the world was not coming as soon as they had anticipated and that to operate in the world they had to come to terms with Greco-Roman culture. This culture was often hostile to Christianity and was experiencing some turmoil itself with its patriarchal patterns being challenged by women's rights legislation. In order to draw less antagonistic attention upon themselves, the early Christians adopted traditional cultural views on appropriate behavior for women.

- (8) The evidence is unclear whether women functioned as presbyters (elders) in the early churches and whether they officiated at baptism and Eucharist. The evidence that indicates that they did do so includes:

- (a) tombstones that refer to women as presbyters.
- (b) a fresco from a Roman catacomb that depicts a group of women jointly celebrating the Lord's Supper.
- (c) the repeated emphasis in early Christian writings for three centuries that condemned the practice of women being involved in teaching and sacramental ministries.

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- (9) The theological justification given for excluding women from teaching and sacramental ministries was a patriarchal interpretation of the Biblical tradition, both Hebrew Scriptures and Christian Scriptures.

Two other less-articulated factors in this exclusion were:

- (a) a fear that menstruating women would somehow pollute the worship and sacraments of the church.
- (b) a shift in the Christian understanding of ministry, with the initial understanding being that "ministry" included a variety of tasks and involved all the members of community, and the later understanding that "ministry" involved the power of "superiors" over an inferior laity.

- (10) Despite their exclusion from teaching and sacramental functions, women did exercise other ministries in early Christianity, namely the three roles of prophets, deacons, and widows.

- (11) The evidence is unclear whether women served as deacons in earliest Christianity. Two references that indicate that women did serve as deacons are:

- (a) the reference in the New Testament epistle 1 Timothy, which gives instructions for the appropriate behavior of deacons. The word "women" here has often been translated as "wives" but could mean women who are deacons.
- (b) the mention of the torture of two young Christian women who were called ministers in their community in a letter by a certain Bithnian governor.

- (12) In subsequent centuries women deacons or "deaconesses" were appointed. For the most part the recipients of their ministry were other women.

- (13) The primary task of the order of "widows" was prayer.

- (14) Two movements that deviated from what became mainstream, orthodox Christianity and which provided wide leadership opportunities for women were Gnosticism and Montanism.

The teachings of both of these movements were denounced as "heretical" by those in the "orthodox" and "catholic" tradition. One probable reason for the exclusion and persecution of these two groups by orthodox Christianity is the varied roles that these groups gave to women.

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(15) Match one of these early female Christian writers with the descriptions below:

(a) Perpetua

(b) Proba

(c) Egeria

4 1/2

- a A member of a well-to-do family, she became a Christian, was arrested during a time of persecution, and was eventually martyred.
- c A wealthy woman who went on a pilgrimage of several years, she wrote a travel diary of it.
- b The matron of a prominent and wealthy family, she studied classical culture and wrote.
- a Her writing protests the oppression of women and outlines her convictions that God had liberated her from the law and from cultural expectations of being wife and mother, and that her loyalty to Christ enabled her to transcend her identity as a female or a citizen of a particular nation.
- a Authoring the earliest known piece of Christian literature written by a woman, she wrote about her understanding of Christianity, her view of the society in which she lived, and her role among the other Christians with whom she was imprisoned.
- c Her fifth century writing provides much information on early Christian worship and architecture and on the condition of Biblical sites in the fifth century.
- a For some time her writing circulated in the early churches for purposes of instruction and inspiration.
- b Rearranging lines from well-known Latin poets, she utilized the "cento" form of poetry to tell the Biblical story to a Roman audience.
- a In her writing she depicts herself with both masculine and feminine characteristics and images, thereby presenting herself as a Christian who is freed from society's expectations of women and men.

(16) Attitudes toward women in the Christian tradition were greatly shaped by several Christian theological writers in the first six centuries. These writers, all men, are referred to as the "fathers of the church".

These early theologians attempted to explain the gospel in the thought patterns of the Greco-Roman world, which had a strong "dualistic" way of thinking.

In a one-paragraph essay on the next page, briefly explain this dualistic approach to reality and how it affected the way women were regarded.

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(16) (cont'd)

4 Dualism divided reality into two opposing or contradictory spheres, the sphere of mind and spirit and the sphere of the body or flesh. The mind and spirit were identified with that which was good or virtuous while the flesh was represented as that which had to be overcome or conquered. Sometimes this line of thought condemned the body and the material world as hopelessly evil and corrupt. This dualistic approach to the world had an influence on the way women were regarded. They were identified traditionally with the body while the mind was seen as essentially masculine. The result was an association of the female with the flesh, the material world, and the drive to satisfy physical desires, and, therefore, with that which was evil.

(17) Some of the beliefs of the church "fathers" in regard to women were:

- 3
- (a) Women are responsible for sin in the world in the first place.
 - (b) Women are a continuing source of sin in the world since they seduce men away from the "heights" of mind and spirit to a lower concern for physical satisfaction and pleasure.
 - (c) Since they are a danger to the spiritual well-being of the community, women are to be kept subordinate in church and society.
 - (d) Even though women are redeemed by baptism in Christ just as men are, and even though the gender of souls is irrelevant to God, this spiritual equality did not translate into equality in the concrete life of family, church, and nation.

(18) The church "fathers" tended to view sexual union as tainted with sin. They did not condemn marriage per se but warned against lust between husband and wife. Sexual intercourse was acceptable if the aim was to produce children and it was not ruled by the passions.

3

Preferable to marriage and certainly to sexual intercourse was the life of virginity.

This non-marriage option gave Christians:

- (a) the freedom to be martyrs.
- (b) a "head start" on the life that awaited them in the Kingdom of God.

(19) Under the Christianity of the church "fathers", virginity was the one channel in the Christian community through which women could acquire some measure of practical equality with men. This was accomplished by a woman obliterating her "femaleness", that is:

- 2
- (a) denying her childbearing ability
 - (b) fasting to eliminate her menstrual period
 - (c) making herself as unattractive as possible

(20) Virgin women ~~life~~ were allowed some measure of authority and freedom because they no longer represented the powerful "lower nature" which could lure men away from the virtuous life of mind and spirit

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